



# Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Winter 2015

[www.Mountvernoncivicasociation.Org](http://www.Mountvernoncivicasociation.Org)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year to all! I trust everyone enjoyed the holiday season and is ready for 2015. The MVCA will be starting the New Year by holding the annual membership meeting at 7:30pm on Wednesday, January 14 in the library at Washington Mill Elementary School. The guest speaker will be Dan Storck, Mount Vernon School Board Member for Fairfax County Public Schools. Although the meeting will start at 7:30pm, please join us for pizza and beverages beginning at 7:00pm.

Please be sure to check your mail soon for the MVCA annual membership letter and application. Completing the application and sending in your membership fee will allow us to update the MVCA Membership Directory which will be sent to all members this Spring. As always, the Membership Directory provides valuable information about our community and details the providers of services in our local area.

As the MVCA begins its new year, there are opportunities for volunteers to join one or more of the many MVCA committees listed on the last page of this newsletter. There are also committee chairmanship positions available for the Transportation and the Environment & Recreation committees. Please visit or contact one of the MVCA board members or other committee members for information about serving. Also, Pete Esser has left the MVCA board. Pete served for

## MVCA

### Membership Meeting

**Wednesday, January 14, 2015**

Washington Mill Elementary  
7:00 PM pizza and soda 7:30 PM program

### Speaker

Dan Storck, Mount Vernon  
School Board Member for  
Fairfax County Public Schools

many years as MVCA vice-president and chairman of the Transportation Committee. Thank you, Pete, for your service and we wish you all the best!

Sadly, for those who were unaware, long-time resident and neighbor Mike Habib passed away in October, following a long illness. Mike was a MVCA board director and committee chairman who served as a staunch proponent, advisor and dedicated neighbor for our community. For many years Mike supervised the annual community cleanups and was an organizational volunteer for each of the MVCA annual picnics. We wish his family and friends well for he is missed by us all.

Hope to see you at the annual meeting on January 14.

*Paul Schray, President  
Mount Vernon Civic Association*

## THE WATCH REPORT

Several recent incidents illustrate the needs for vigilance in our neighborhood. Three daytime forced-entry burglaries, many thefts from unlocked vehicles, and a few acts of random vandalism have disturbed our tranquility. The police have given us notice that, besides, there is a predictable rise in thefts during the winter holiday season. It is in everyone's interest to stay alert to the presence of unfamiliar vehicles while folks are at work or away from home. Let visitors know that they are observed.

After twenty-five years of service at Mount Vernon, Officer Kottemann, our liaison with the Fairfax Police, has retired. All of us who have worked with him over these years are very appreciative of his

dedication, courtesy, and professionalism. He was always first in with safety advice, security alerts, and attentive with follow-ups. We welcome his successor, Officer Robert "Bubba" Urps, to the Mount Vernon Station.

To retiring members of Neighborhood Watch, thanks for your many years of discreet service: Tom Hanley, Doug & Marilyn Comer. Welcome to our new volunteer, Samina Naqvi. I am in the process of scheduling the Watch from January through July, and welcome any new volunteers: [cowens7@gmu.edu](mailto:cowens7@gmu.edu).

*Cóilín Owens, Neighborhood Watch Coordinator*

## BE PART OF THE CELEBRATION!

The 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Birthnight Supper and Ball will be held on **Sunday, February 15, 2015** in Mount Vernon Estate's Ford Orientation Center. This festive black tie event is the pinnacle fundraiser for the Neighborhood Friends of Mount Vernon, and celebrates the birthday of our founding father, George Washington. As in the past, Mount Vernon expects this to be a sold out event.

This year's Ball will feature a seated dinner by Design Cuisine, one of the D.C. metropolitan area's premier caterers, dancing to the Kevin Kline Band, a special performance by soprano Kellie McHugh, and a cake cutting ceremony with our very own General and Lady Washington.

All proceeds from the event benefit the 2014-2015 Neighborhood Friends sponsored project, Phase II Restoration of the East Lawn Slope. Not only is this a fun and celebratory evening, but it is for a very worthwhile cause. No project can be more important on the Estate than ensuring the stability

of the slope on which the Mansion stands. Northern Virginia received historic rain on the August 12, 2014, and while the Phase I remediated northern and southern sections of the slope held up remarkably well, the powerful storm greatly compromised the mid-section of the slope which had not been restored. A 20 foot wide slide of ground resulted from this 500-year rainfall which wrecked havoc on the natural springs that run under the entire bluff and are surrounded by marine clay soil. Immediate work on this section is now needed to prevent further slippage and damage to the slope.

Tickets for the Ball are \$195 per person and there are also sponsorship opportunities with wonderful benefits available. For more information, please visit [www.mountvernon.org/birthnightball](http://www.mountvernon.org/birthnightball) or contact Tammy Eddy at 703-779-5075 or [teddy@mountvernon.org](mailto:teddy@mountvernon.org).



## PLANNING AND ZONING

Happy New Year, one and all. Hope you had a Merry Christmas. To the business at hand. We discussed at length the resolution for funding of Phase 2 for the Route 1 corridor. The single resolution was divided into two parts – giving equal importance to the funding and phasing of the project and allowing an ability to send to different elected officials, if needed. The P&Z and Transportation committees approved resolutions are on the MVCA web page.

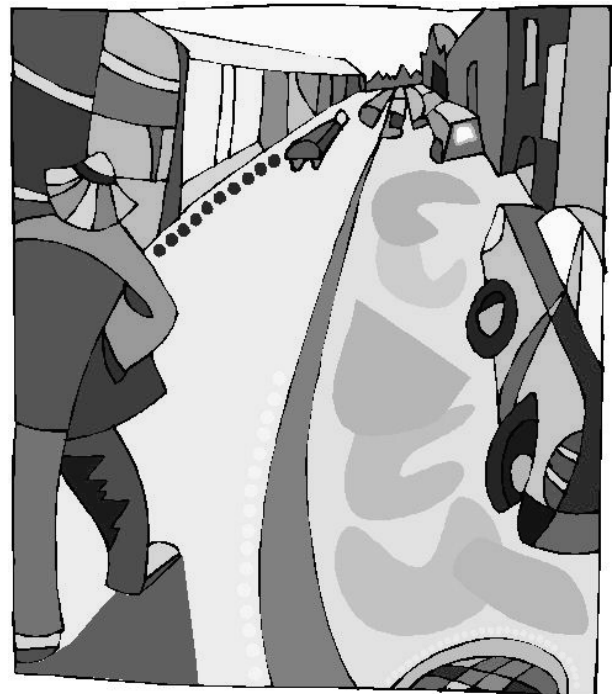
We were provided an information briefing on the Morning Star Daycare application as a Special Exception. The proposed address is 8628 Woodlawn Court Alexandria—next to the approved Baywood Hotel on the corner of Richmond Highway and Woodlawn Court. The facility would operate in two shifts: 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM (80-120 children) and 3:00 PM to 1:00 PM (40 children). Both the P&Z committee and the Woodlawn Court residents present shared many of the same concerns—traffic flow to and from the facility and at the facility itself. The Committee reserved comment until the concerns have been addressed. The Planning Commission date for this application is January 29, 2015.

Paul Frank, Executive Director, Collingwood Library, briefed us on his proposal to subdivide the Collingwood Library property into two parcels. Justification for the request is that he would maximize profits for the Library by selling the second parcel, on the river side, to one owner. The area is R2. The

map, with the current conservation easement, shows a long driveway from East Boulevard Drive, through the property, to a 5000SF footprint for possibly one large home near the Potomac River. Because of the many environmental concerns, we asked that the Planning Commission date be deferred until the Environment and Recreation Committee and Collingwood residents review the application.

Lastly, I've put Supervisor Hyland's Visioning Task Force results on our web site. It's delineated into 1-5 years, 5-10 years, and 10+ years and touches all aspects of living in Mount Vernon; transportation, land use, environmental, etc. If you have an idea, opinion, priority, please let me know. The input will be sent to individual MVCCA co-chairs to draft a letter to our elected officials that states the recommendations of importance to the MVCCA from all standing committees.

*Karan Cerutti  
Planning and Zoning Chair*



## NEWSLETTER AND DIRECTORY

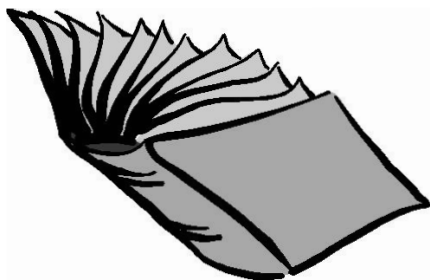
Happy New Year to all Mount Vernon Civic Association residents! We hope your holidays were joyous.

As we reported, Elizabeth Bancroft has stepped down as co-chair of membership for the MVCA in December, 2014. On behalf of all of us at the MVCA, we would like to thank Elizabeth for her wonderful efforts with MVCA Membership updates and activities.

One of our neighbors Gina Lynch has volunteered to be co-chair with Ken for the Membership & Directory Committee. Another of our neighbors Ron Leffler has been helping our association by updating our MVCA website with picnic pictures, prior newsletters and other MVCA updates. Ron will be assisting us with the entry of the updated membership data. Thank you both, we appreciate your help.

This is a reminder to long-time residents and first time notice to new residents—this is the year our new 2015-2016 MVCA directory is issued. We will be sending out membership forms again shortly in the mail. For your \$20 annual membership dues, the association provides your directory, four quarterly newsletters and our annual picnic...what a bargain! We also sponsor quarterly membership meetings with various speakers and presentations on local neighborhood and county issues. We request you return your membership forms as early as possible because we hope to have your

new directories mailed to you before our 9th annual picnic scheduled for May 16.



Also, don't forget that we sell advertising in our directory and newsletter; advertising opportunities range from your business card to full page ads. Please contact Ken and he can provide you information on purchasing this valuable marketing space.

These two issues do not necessarily apply to membership but are important points to share. The first is that a MVCA member reported that his house (built in 1958) had significant and unknown damage done by the last earthquake. It wasn't until the chimney-sweeper came in this fall that he discovered that his chimney had moved at the roof line and that the internal lining had disintegrated (even with a cap). If you live in an older house and have a fireplace, you may want to contact a chimney-sweep to check out your fireplace and chimney.

Secondly, one of our postal carriers passed on that there are salespeople who are putting fliers in outside-home mail boxes. Besides being illegal it may cover your outgoing mail and therefore mail may not be picked up in a timely manner. The carrier also said if residents see strangers putting fliers in boxes, they should tell them to stop. The carrier said the USPS can't guarantee mail safety if mail boxes are cluttered with sales papers delivered by others.

We look forward to providing you with another fabulous directory. Please send in your membership forms as soon as you can.

Best wishes to you in 2015!

*Ken Poortinga*  
703 360 7740  
*ken8487@verizon.net*

*Gina Lynch*  
703 780 9424

## BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Happy New Year and good luck with all those new (or old) resolutions.

The 2016 budget discussions are just getting started. The County is watching the tax collections and revenue closely. The County tax receipts are down and many are blaming this on the lingering effects of the sequestration and federal budget cuts.

In addition, home values in Fairfax County are lower than projected and job growth is slower in the County. The northern Virginia job market is growing at 0.4% versus 2.0% for the rest of the country. According to County Executive Long "the cornerstone sectors of the local economy—federal government and professional services—are losing jobs." The sectors gaining jobs are lower paying jobs like retail, hospitality and construction and other services.

Home sales are down about 10% through October. Supply of homes is strong, which is adding pressure to valuations. Non-residential values are flat and expected to fall in 2016. Office vacancy rates are at their highest rate since 1991. There are concerns about absorbing all the new construction related to the Silver Line expansion. All this adds to short falls in revenue projections for 2015 and concerns moving forward.

With budget shortfalls projected in 2016 and 2017 for Fairfax County, we also have State budget deficits.

County expenses are projected to increase by 4.93% in 2016. Most of this increase will go towards the increasing student population in the FCPS system and salary and benefits for the FC employees. Many of these costs are mandatory to cover new students and employee benefit requirements. However, the bulk of this projected spending increase is for market rate pay adjustments for County employees.

The 2016 budget shortfall is projected to be \$100 million and about \$79 million for 2017. This year's (2015) budget deficit was projected at \$37 million. We are now running an even larger budget deficit for 2015.

CE Long noted that budget reductions will be necessary to balance our budget. Yet, a slowing economy puts more pressure and costs on our human services budgets. So, as we look to balance our budget, we have mandatory expenses for public school growth and the human services budget expanding. Yet, CE Long will be looking to reduce the overall budget. Something is going to have to give. We will need to be careful of shorting our investment budgets for things like roads and infrastructure or this will have troubling effects on the future.

What does that mean for us? Look for a push for more County revenue in the form of a meals tax or increased real estate taxes. It is unsure how effective further budget cuts will be. Additionally, the County had better keep an eye on our credit rating and being downgraded by the credit rating agencies.

As your humble Budget and Finance Chair, I think we should push for a more diversified economy, continue to fight for more of our share of State money being returned, and have more discussions on the expenses associated with the changing demographics in our school system. Our leaders should continue to support FC's long tradition of growth and prosperity by committing itself to informed and responsible fiscal behavior.

As always, please feel free to email me at [mclucid@verizon.net](mailto:mclucid@verizon.net). The 2016 budget discussion documents can be found online at [fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb).

*Sean McCarthy, Budget and Finance Chair*

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### *Winter Safety Suggestions*

Clear car windows of snow and ice before driving to ensure visibility; keep adequate cold-weather windshield washer fluid level

- Allow extra room for braking on wet, icy and snowy roads; be particularly alert for school buses and their passengers.
- Pedestrians should consider carrying or wearing lights and reflective gear.
- Use caution getting on and off buses and at METRO platforms.
- Use external lights for burglary prevention; report suspicious vehicles; keep your vehicles locked; do not leave cars unattended with the engine running at stores.
- Have at least one battery and/or hand-cranked radio for use in weather emergencies, power outages, etc.

Call 911 for POLICE/FIRE/AMBULANCE-RESCUE emergencies—be sure to give an accurate address.

Call 703 691 2131 for NON-emergency matters involving Public Safety.

Sign up for FREE official Fairfax County Alert e-mail system at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts), which will enable you to get weather/traffic/emergency alerts on up to ten (10) devices such as cell phone/home phone/e-mail re up to five (5) geographic locations such as home, work loci, schools,etc. The system is easily customized by you at any time to your needs and interests.

Read the Fairfax County Police Blotter available on-line and also in the VOICE and GAZETTE weekly newspapers.

Our new FCPD Crime Prevention and Community Relations Officer, Master Police Officer Robert Urps, will be speaking at our March 11 MVCA General Meeting. He is very experienced and welcomes questions.He is assigned to the FCPD Mount Vernon District Station at 2511 Parkers Lane located very close to Sherwood Hall Lane and the INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital. MPO Urps can be reached through the MCPD Mount Vernon Station on 703 360-8400 ext 4.


Remember please call 911 for emergencies. Do not assume someone else has.

*Your Neighbor,  
John A. Hurley*





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**Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.**

**Mount Vernon Civic  
Association Area  
Happenings**

MVCA General Membership Meeting  
*Wednesday, January 14, 2015*  
Washington Mill Elementary School  
7:00 PM pizza, 7:30 PM meeting

MVCA General Membership Meeting  
*Wednesday, March 11, 2015*  
Washington Mill Elementary School  
7:00 PM pizza, 7:30 PM meeting

Ninth Annual MVCA picnic  
*Saturday, May 16, 2015*  
Location to be announced

**Officers**

President: Paul Schray .....(703) 619-9377  
1st Vice President: Bruce Kitchen ..... (703) 799-6473  
2nd Vice President: Sean McCarthy .....(703) 360-0372  
Secretary: Karan Cerutti .....(703) 778-4442  
Treasurer: Tom Cleary .....(703) 360-3903

**Directors**

Ken Poortinga .....(703) 360-7740  
Dan Rinzel .....(703) 360-4627  
John Skudlarek .....(703) 704-5213

**Committee Chairs**

Budget and Finance: Sean McCarthy .....(703) 360-0372  
Consumer Affairs: Cindy Brown .....(703) 348-7175  
Education: Bruce Kitchen .....(703) 799-6473  
Environment & Recreation: Vacant  
Health & Human Services: Jim Brown .....(703) 348-7175  
Membership/Directory Co-Chair:  
    Gina Lynch .....(703) 780-9424  
Membership/Directory Co-Chair:  
    Ken Poortinga .....(703) 360-7740  
Neighborhood Watch: Coliin Owens .....(703) 780-5218  
Planning & Zoning: Karan Cerutti .....(703) 778-4442  
Public Safety: John Hurley .....(703) 799-9353